

We face a clear choice in the greater Middle East: Either freedom will advance, or that region will continue to export violence to the world. The work of building democracies in nations that have endured decades of tyranny is hard. It's hard work. It will require the kind of sustained commitment that won the cold war. We accept that duty. We accept that duty in our time because our cause is right.

Even governments that did not join in the removal of Saddam's regime now understand that democracy in Iraq must succeed. And that work will succeed, because the appeal of freedom is universal. Freedom is not America's gift to the world. Freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

The will of this country is strong. The will of our coalition is strong. And what we have begun, we will finish.

For all Americans, the last 3 years have brought tests we didn't ask for and for achievements shared by all. And by our actions, we have shown what kind of nation we are. We're a nation with a mission, and that mission comes from our most basic beliefs. We believe that freedom is the right of every single person in the world. By the unselfish dedication of Americans in uniform, people in our own country and in lands far away, people can live in freedom and know the peace that freedom brings.

America has been given great responsibilities, and they have come to the right country. We don't shirk from any challenge. We're rising to the call of history. Now and in the future, this great Republic will lead the cause of freedom and peace.

May God bless you all, and may God continue to bless our country. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:37 p.m. at Fort Polk Army Airfield. In his remarks, he referred to Brig. Gen. Jason K. Kamiya, USA, commanding general, Col. Arthur "Wade" Woolfrey, Jr., USA, deputy commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Iuniasolua T. Savusa, USA, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk; Gen. Larry R. Ellis, USA, commanding general, and Command Sgt. Maj. Carl E. Christian, USA, U.S. Army Forces Command; country music entertainers Kevin Sharp and John Berry; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; senior Al Qaida associate Abu

Musab Al Zarqawi; and USAID officer Laurence Foley, who was killed in Amman, Jordan, on October 28, 2002. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting a Certification Required by the Ratification Resolution of the Chemical Weapons Convention February 17, 2004

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Chairman:)

Consistent with the resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, adopted by the United States Senate on April 24, 1997, and based on the recommendation of the Department of Commerce, I certify that for calendar year 2003:

In connection with Condition 9, Protection of Advanced Biotechnology, the legitimate commercial activities and interests of chemical, biotechnology, and pharmaceutical firms in the United States were not harmed significantly by the limitations of the Convention on access to, and production of, those chemicals and toxins listed in Schedule 1 of the Annex on Chemicals.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard G. Lugar, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

Interview With Mouafac Harb of the Middle East Television Network January 29, 2004

President's Religious Perspective

Mr. Harb. Mr. President, thank you very much for supporting our channel and our initiative. We will make sure on our channel, your policy, the point of view of your administration, will always be presented clearly and in fair context. However, we will make